Case 1:	12-cv-01369-LPS	Document 118	Filed 06/26/15	Page 1 of 24 PageID #: 2617	
1	IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT				
2		IN AND FOR	THE DISTRICT	OF DELAWARE	
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4	KICKFLIP, I	·		: CIVIL ACTION	
5		Plaintiff,		: :	
6		V .		: :	
7	FACEBOOK, I			: : NO. 12-1369 (LPS)	
8		Defendant.		_	
9			Wilmington,		
10	Friday, June 12, 2015 Telephone Conference				
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12	BEFORE:	HONORA	BLE LEONARD 1	P. STARK, Chief Judge	
13	APPEARANCES:				
14	ALLEANANCES	•			
15		MORRIS JAME	S. IJ.P		
16			H L. DORSNEY,	, ESQ.	
17		and			
18		NEWMAN DuWO BY: DEREK	RS, LLP LINKE, ESQ.		
19			le, Washingto	on)	
20		and			
21		STRANGE & B BY: BRIAN	UTLER R. STRANGE, I	ESQ.	
22			ngeles, Cali		
23			ounsel for Ki ambit	ickflip, Inc., d/b/a	
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25				an P. Gaffigan istered Merit Reporter	

1	APPEARANCES: (Continued)				
2					
3	ROSS ARONSTAM & MORITZ, LLP BY: BENJAMIN J. SCHLADWEILER, ESQ.				
4	and				
5	COVINGTON & BURLING, LLP				
6	BY: THOMAS O. BARNETT, ESQ., JONATHAN GIMBLETT, ESQ., and				
7	MELISSA LOU, ESQ. (Washington, District of Columbia)				
8	Counsel for Facebook, Inc.				
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11	- 000 -				
12	PROCEEDINGS				
13	(REPORTER'S NOTE: The following telephone				
14	conference was held in chambers, beginning at 3:10 p.m.)				
15	THE COURT: Good afternoon, everybody. This is				
16	Judge Stark. Who is there, please?				
17	MR. DORSNEY: Good afternoon, Your Honor. Ken				
18	Dorsney on behalf of Kickflip. With me is my co-counsel,				
19	Brian Strange from Strange & Carpenter and Derek Linke from				
20	Newman DuWors.				
21	THE COURT: Okay.				
22	MR. SCHLADWEILER: Good afternoon, Your Honor.				
23	Ben Schladweiler from Ross Aronstam & Moritz on behalf of				
24	Facebook, along with Jonathan Gimblett, Thomas Barnett, and				
25	Melissa Lou from Covington.				

THE COURT: Okay. Good afternoon to all of you. I have my court reporter with me. For the record, it is the case of Kickflip versus Facebook, Civil Action No. 12-1369-LPS. I set this time to talk about a discovery dispute raised by Facebook, so let me hear first from Facebook, please.

MR. GIMBLETT: Good afternoon. This is Jonathan Gimblett for Facebook. I'll be relatively brief because we have laid out the outlying in our letter of June the 8th.

In short, we regard the declarations that Kickflip filed one week after the close of supplemental briefing on summary judgment as a major development in the case. Kickflip has relied now for 20 months on this agreement which it represented was signed on December the 15th, 2009 as a basis for its standing.

These declarations establish first that they repeatedly misrepresented these dates of execution of that agreement. Perhaps more significantly, they now admit that the agreement was actually created in March 2012, in the midst of a tax audit by the IRS into the 2009 tax year, as a specific fact date, in order to claim a tax benefit in that 2009 tax year.

These disclosures came after we have filed our supplementary reply brief, despite the fact that we had been asking for, two months previously to that date, explanations

as to some documents that had been produced which implied that the agreement wasn't in place at least as of July of 2010, and the complete absence of any other documentary support in the record for the 2009 creation date.

We asked repeatedly, and this culminated in e-mails we sent to Kickflip's counsel on April the 3rd, five days before the filing deadline, asking specifically for them to disclose any records so that we can get to the bottom of that, and we never received a response to that request.

Having now made these disclosures about the events, we believe that they raise substantial questions that are directly relevant to the standing question at issue in this litigation.

One question again as to whether you can rely on the December agreement to establish Kickflip standing, if, as it appears, and this may well be confirmed with the development of further discovery, the agreement was entered into in a tortious intent and is in violation of public policy and is void ab initio.

There are also questions that go to Kickflip's and Gambit Labs understanding of the implications of the November agreement, since we now know the December agreement was created just seven months before this litigation was instituted. Then that may well set off something about

Kickflip's understanding of a defect in that standing flowing out of the November agreement.

And, finally, there are questions here that may well warrant sanctions ultimately depending on what discovery shows.

Now, the only substantive response that Kickflip has made to our request, the case we made for additional discovery is to argue that we, Facebook lacked standing as a third party to challenge the December agreement. But this way of trying to frame the question really gets it backwards because what is at issue in this stage of the litigation is not Facebook's standing, it's Kickflip's standing, and Kickflip has the burden to showing it has standing. In trying to meet that burden, it relied repeatedly on this December agreement and on language within it, and it is asking the Court to give effect to that language as a basis for its own standing.

Now, if additional discovery shows that the agreement was fraudulent, that it's void ab initio as this country's public policy, then that means effectually the agreement never came into existence and this court could not rely on the December agreement to establish asserting standing. In fact, that question really has nothing to do with Facebook's standing to challenge the December agreement. It is all about whether this agreement is valid

and, as such, gives them a basis to rely on it in order to establish Kickflip's standing. We believe that discovery is merited to answer that question.

THE COURT: Do you, does Facebook at this question have any doubt that what you are being told happened in terms of the timing of when the December 2009 agreement was actually drafted and how it is that you were only told this date somewhat recently? Do you have any doubt that that is story is the truth and that that timing is the truth at this point?

MR. GIMBLETT: We simply don't know. All we have, Your Honor, is a representation from Mr. Benizek and from Mr. Smoak.

I have to say, two months after we first raised this question in the Rule 30(b)(6) deposition of Mr. Smoak on February 25th, it strikes us as strange that we can ask that question repeatedly from that date on and only hear this startling admission from Kickflip weeks after the close of briefing on the motion.

THE COURT: All right. And with respect to briefing, if I do grant the additional discovery you are seeking, does it necessarily follow that you would want an opportunity to supplement the briefs on the pending motion for summary judgment?

MR. GIMBLETT: Yes, I think that would be a way

to proceed.

THE COURT: All right. Thank you. Let me hear from Kickflip, please.

MR. STRANGE: Thank you, Your Honor. Brian Strange for Kickflip.

We believe that Facebook's request for additional follow-up discovery should be denied. Facebook has already had the opportunity to take extensive unilateral discovery, including deposing Mr. Smoak three times; twice as it a deponent for Kickflip and once as a deponent for Volume 11. Facebook has served three requests for production of documents on the issue of standing.

The reason that we think that discovery is neither relevant, nor necessary is that there is no dispute that the December agreement was created and executed before this litigation commenced and, therefore, has no impact on the issue of standing.

The substance of the November agreement -
December agreement has not changed. Rather, Facebook has

made every attempt to challenge the validity of the

agreement, first for want of consideration and then failure

to close, among others. But the case law is clear that as

a third party, Facebook does not have standing to challenge

the validity of the agreement. That is under the Emerson

case.

Here, the circumstances after the discovery closed, this came up about the date of this agreement. We have a signed declaration from an attorney who is licensed to practice who swore under oath about what happened and I think explained it in detail as well as admitted that he is the one that gave this information to Mr. Smoak in preparation for his deposition.

There is absolutely no reason to challenge an attorney filing a declaration under penalty of perjury about what happened here. But I think the most important thing is while Facebook has now come up with a novel theory that perhaps the December agreement constituted tax fraud, they don't have standing to make that argument because it's pretty clear under the cases we have cited to, The Commissioner of the Internal Revenue case, that a third party does not have the right to have a Court declare a legal contract void.

The Court won't enforce that agreement if the parties are trying to enforce it. But here, you have a third party trying to attack it, and under the *Emerson* case and the *Commissioner of Internal Revenue* case, Facebook does not have the right to make that challenge. Once we get to that point, this discovery is not relevant because it is undisputed that the contract was made and entered into prior to this litigation being started, in fact, seven months

prior to it, so that this discovery would not be helpful on the issue of standing.

THE COURT: All right. Let me ask you some questions. Let's assume for the moment that Facebook doesn't have standing. Why shouldn't I sua sponte want to understand what happened here when, by your own admission, if I'm following correctly, the testimony that was given repeatedly was false? Why shouldn't I sua sponte want that to be looked into?

MR. GIMBLETT: Well, Your Honor, I think that the issue here is the date of this agreement, that is, the December agreement. And I think you have a declaration, a very detailed declaration from Mr. Benizek, an attorney here in California, who has also appeared in your court apparently, at least in the Delaware District Court, who stated that he believed at all times that this declaration — or, I'm sorry, that this document was made in December and didn't realize until he started looking at his billing records in April that there was a mistake. And as soon as he found that out, he looked further, admitted in the signed declaration about what happened, and that he is the one that told Mr. Smoak that it was executed in or around December instead of March 2012. And he explained how that came about.

He has also offered to have his deposition taken without the necessity of a subpoena. So it's not like he is

hiding everything here. He has been I think very straightforward and admitted that it is his fault. So it is not like it is Mr. Smoak, himself doing something. He was advised by his corporate counsel, and it seems like there is a sufficient explanation in the record about what happened regarding the date of this document.

THE COURT: But, again, why shouldn't I want that to be explored and tested rather than just accept it at face value, particularly given what Facebook and the Court were told before about this agreement?

MR. STRANGE: Well, Your Honor, I think it depends on whether you believe that the declaration of Mr. Benizek adequately explains the matter. I think if it does, and since it is not really relevant to the issue of standing, that you could allow perhaps open general discovery because this has been allowed discovery only on the issue of standing, and Your Honor could rule on the pending motion for summary judgment on standing, and then allow general discovery to open and perhaps allow discovery during that period, if it is something of concern to the Court.

THE COURT: You emphasize that there has been extensive discovery, but discovery is intended to get to the facts and the truth. And the discovery, extensive though it has been, only, at least in terms of the date that this

agreement was executed, only got to an untruth until very recently, after the briefing, as I understand it. Isn't that correct?

MR. STRANGE: It is correct that there was misstatements regarding the date of this document. There is no question about it. That is, that although it was dated in December, it was actually created in March of 2012. And as soon as that came to light, we had these declarations filed by Mr. Smoak and the attorney who was involved in it.

But it is correct there was a mistake here, Your Honor. There is no question about it. We had Mr. Benizek testify at length about it in his declaration, and he is also willing to have his deposition taken.

I guess the question is, with respect to if Your Honor believes it is important to have his deposition taken and tested on his declaration, whether we need to do that before ruling on the standing issue or making a ruling and allowing general discovery to open in the case.

THE COURT: Well, then come to the void as public policy argument. How could I today rule out the possibility that this agreement actually is in some ways part of a tax fraud and therefore potentially going to be found to be void? Can I just reject that out of hand at this point?

MR. STRANGE: Yes, Your Honor. I think that as

a matter of law, you can do that. Because under the Sammons case that we cited, it cites Williston on Contracts for the proposition that a third party might not have a Court declare an illegal contract void. It's only enforcing the contract by one of the parties. But here, there is no question that assignment of an antitrust claims are allowed as an assignment, and there is no question that corporations can assign stock to each other, so it's not like the subject matter of this contract is somehow improper in terms of the assignment. So what basically it is trying to do is have this declared an illegal contract and then void. I think under the clear authorities on contracts that a third party can't do that.

THE COURT: Well --

MR. GIMBLETT: If I may?

THE COURT: No, hold on. So what would be wrong, Mr. Strange, with the analysis that says the burden to prove standing to be in my court and to bring this antitrust lawsuit is on Kickflip. The whole basis for your standing as I understand it to this point has been this December 2009 agreement. And if the facts were to show that that December 2009 agreement was all part of a tax fraud, wouldn't I, on behalf of the Court, want to know that? And if that were the case, are you saying I would have no discretion to say, look, this case, they failed to meet

their burden of standing because they're relying on a document that was part of a tax fraud scheme.

What is wrong with that analysis? I understand you're not admitting to those facts, but if that were what discovery showed, what is wrong with that analysis?

MR. STRANGE: Well, yes. I want to make it clear that this issue of tax fraud is really something that is pretty far from the truth of what happened here. But putting that aside for a moment, there are a few issues here, Your Honor.

No. 1 is that the November agreement we think is not an express assignment of antitrust claims. Facebook's whole argument is that the November agreement is an express assignment of antitrust claims and therefore those claims went over to Gambit.

Just look at, we think we win standing just on the basis of the November agreement because it is not an express assignment, it doesn't say anything about legal claims or causes of action, and so therefore we have standing under the November agreement.

Then turning to the December agreement, which expressly says the antitrust claims are not assigned over to Gambit, even if that were invalid, which we don't think it is, you still have the November agreement which allows standing here.

But just to go back further, Your Honor, under the analysis of, under the cases we have cited and bear in mind that Facebook has not cite a single case in support of its proposition. The cases are pretty clear that a court, when looking at the issue of the validity of a contract, doesn't have to have a minitrial on tax fraud. The issue is whether, whether that contract assigned claims under the antitrust law and a third party can't say, well, we're going to challenge whether that contract is illegal or void. That is exactly what happened in the *Commissioner* case that we cited where the Commissioner of IRS said that the contract that the taxpayer was using as a deduction was an illegal contract because it involved artifacts which violated a federal law on artifacts.

And the Court said, well, the Commissioner doesn't have standing to go make that argument as being void against public policy. It's only if the parties are trying to enforce the contract, even if it is illegal to enforce, that doesn't mean they can't rely on it for purposes of getting a tax deduction.

The same here is that it doesn't mean we can't rely on it for the purpose of whether there is an assignment of antitrust claims.

THE COURT: All right. Thank you.

Let me turn back to Mr. Gimblett, if you have

anything you want to add.

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MR. GIMBLETT: Well, on this question of case law, let me just say that I think that the cases that Kickflip has cited support the analysis that I made up before. The *Emerson* case that Mr. Strange mentions specifically held that a third party does not have standing to challenge a contract because the contract was voidable, not void. I draw that distinction between voidable and void contract.

And avoidable contract is one in which the parties to the contract have the option to declare it void and that is why it makes sense for the third party wouldn't have standing to challenge it.

A void contract, on the other hand, simply doesn't exist. And as such, it is not something that can be enforced by a court. And this is something that is recognized in the *Sammons* case which speaks specifically, has a statement that the statute prohibits an agreement or sale, the result is that the Court will not then there aid to any attempted enforcement of the agreement by the parties.

So this contract being void, the issue is not about whether we have got standing to challenge it. The issue is all about whether you can rely on a contract that is void to establish Kickflip standing.

THE COURT: All right. And I know there is the briefing on summary judgment but address just briefly for me the suggestion that maybe, maybe standing is going to be established by the plaintiff entirely on the November agreement and therefore it could be that I don't even have to really have to worry about the December agreement.

MR. GIMBLETT: Right. As we explained in our briefing, our original briefing on summary judgment and the supplemental brief that we submitted, we think there is a good argument from the language that this was an assignment of all assets related to the business and the assets include claims. And in addition to that, the conduct of Kickflip and Gambit Labs concerns an intent to transfer those claims to Gambit Labs. There was a letter in November 2009 that basically asserted the claims that Kickflip seeks to assert in this litigation and it did so on behalf of Gambit Labs.

Now, this latest submission from Kickflip that the December agreement was, after all a March 2012 agreement, could very well bolster that argument because an agreement that was entered into several months before litigation was initiated may well, and we'll see if discovery establishes this, may well have been worded as specifically with this litigation in mind. And if that was the case, the inclusion of the very convenient preamble language about the intent to retain claims might well be

better interpreted as effectively a recognition of the November agreement alone left Kickflip with a big standing problem and the December agreement needed to fix that.

Now, if the December agreement is void and can't be relied upon and the November agreement as given all of this evidence we find turns out to have transferred the claims to Gambit Labs, that would be a complete answer to the standing issue. It would establish that Kickflip does not have standing.

THE COURT: All right. One further question, Mr. Gimblett.

There were I think disputes over discovery previously. Can you just briefly refresh my recollection on, was Kickflip trying to prevent this discovery that ultimately revealed what we now know about the truth of the timing of this agreement?

MR. GIMBLETT: So the progression here is that after you denied our motion to dismiss, you ordered limited -- you ordered discovery on standing. At that point, backing up to the 2013, Kickflip produced this December agreement and wrote to you with it basically stating that there is no need for this discovery at all because the December agreement answered any standing questions there could be.

Once we go into discovery, there was an issue of

the inconsistency between Mr. Smoak's deposition testimony where he repeatedly relied on attorney-client privilege not to answer questions and the very detailed and some might say legalistic declarations that he then submitted in opposition to Kickflip's summary judgment.

You ruled, after we had briefed that back and forth, that the Smoak declaration waived privilege and ordered that Kickflip should produce previously withheld documents relating to the November and December agreements. And it was out of the production of those previously withheld documents that the evidence first emerged that the December agreement hadn't in fact been created and executed when Kickflip had represented it was.

THE COURT: Thank you.

I know the motion has been pending for awhile and there has been a number of iterations of issues related to it, though it's helpful to refresh my recollection on that. Thank you.

Mr. Strange, is there anything you want to add?

MR. STRANGE: Yes, Your Honor. If I could.

First of all, with respect to the additional discovery that you ordered.

Not only did we comply with that discovery, we actually entered a second request for production of documents, separate, so that we could be forthcoming with

all of the discovery on this issue.

With respect to the void versus voidable, with due respect, Facebook is just wrong about that. On the Commissioner of Internal Revenue case, the Court said there — the Commissioner tried to say that the contract was void, not voidable, and the Court said that the Commissioner's reliance on Williston is misplaced. Professor Williston does not suggest a third party may have a Court declare and illegal contract void.

So the issue there, Your Honor, is there are cases, and Facebook cites a case regarding, called *Feingold* where the Court says, you cannot assign claims for personal injury or assign claims for punitive damages and therefore wouldn't allow that assignment to be valid.

Here, it's different in that there is no question that you can assign antitrust claims. And so the issue is whether can Facebook make an argument that somehow the contract is illegal, which we don't think it was, but even if it was, can they then say the contract is illegal and therefore void? And the case we cited, the *Commissioner* case I think clearly holds that they do not have standing to make that argument.

One further point, Your Honor, is that we are dealing here, as you know, with antitrust assignments. And the Third Circuit under the *Gulfstream* case is very clear

that antitrust, if you are going to assign an antitrust claim, it has to be an unambiguous assignment. The November agreement is clearly not an unambiguous assignment of antitrust claims.

The whole genesis of this argument by Facebook is trying to avoid that principle because once you look at that November agreement and sees it does not assign antitrust claims, doesn't even say anything about legal causes of action, then there is no argument by Facebook that Kickflip assigned these claims and the standing issue particularly on summary judgment should be denied.

THE COURT: All right. Thank you.

Mr. Gimblett, is there anything else?

MR. GIMBLETT: No, I think that is all for me.

Thank you, Your Honor.

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THE COURT: All right. Thank you. So this is a discovery dispute. I'm not ruling today on summary judgment. I'm not ruling today on whether the December 2009 agreement, which we now know was drafted and executed in March 2012, whether it's void, whether it's part of a fraud. I'm not ruling on any of that.

I'm just faced with a request for additional discovery, and I'm granting that request by Facebook. I think that it is well warranted to allow the additional discovery that Facebook is seeking under the very unusual

circumstances that are presented here. What occurred during discovery and what was revealed about the actual timing of the December 2009 agreement is, I agree with Facebook, a startling admission.

Even accepting all of the representations that are in the record right now, from the attorney as well as Mr. Smoak, as to how this happened, nonetheless, I think when you provide written sworn testimony to another party in litigation and ultimately to a Court, when that sworn testimony goes to at least some of the basis on which you have the burden to prove standing to even be in this court and maintain this lawsuit, and when that testimony turns out repeatedly to be false, I don't think it is unreasonable for the opposing party or indeed for the Court to want to better understand what happened, how that happened, and what, if any, implications there are for that as a result for whether this case can and should be maintained in this court.

The way we go about finding out more information and hopefully finding out all of the necessary facts in order to make the determinations on the other issues at least relating to standing is through discovery. That is what Facebook proposes to do. And I think, again, that is a reasonable request under the circumstances.

It's not entirely clear I suppose whether Facebook has standing to argue that the 2009 agreement is

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void against public policy. I don't think I have to decide that issue as a legal matter today in order to find the discovery sought to be relevant and reasonable.

I know that I have a concern about whether a party should be able to prove standing to press a case in this court based on a document that is part of a fraud, a tax fraud. I'm not saying it was part of a tax fraud, but I'm saying it's appropriate to take discovery because I'd like to be more confident that it was not part of a tax fraud. So the argument that Facebook lacks standing I don't think wins the day for Kickflip on this discovery dispute.

All that said --

MR. STRANGE: Your Honor?

THE COURT: All that said -- hold on. All that said, I am anxious on to get to a final decision whether there is standing, but I do think that after this discovery, it is appropriate to allow the parties to write some additional supplemental briefs. I would like all of that briefing to be done and indeed the discovery to be done as quickly as possible and the briefing to be as succinct as possible in light of what I have ruled today.

I think it is most appropriate that I give you all a few days to meet and confer and propose to me a specific schedule for getting this discovery done and getting me back into a position where this motion is fully

briefed so I can determine if there is standing or not. So I direct that the parties get back to me on that by next Wednesday ideally with a stipulated order related to the discovery and the briefing, but if you can't reach an agreement, then with a short discussion of what your competing proposals are.

That is my ruling. Are there any questions about that, Mr. Gimblett?

MR. GIMBLETT: No questions from me, Your Honor.

THE COURT: All right. Mr. Strange?

MR. STRANGE: Your Honor, Facebook has requested documents from Kickflip's current litigation counsel which seems to me to be inappropriate, but do you want us to meet and confer on that issue?

THE COURT: Yes. I mean this was not really presented to me as a dispute about the specifics of the discovery they were seeking. That is not how you chose to contest this. That said, if you think there is something left to dispute on the specifics, I would imagine that would come up as you are trying to work out an order for me to sign to govern this remaining discovery. And I'm always available through my discovery matters process if there are specific disputes that arise during the discovery that I am going to order.

So hopefully that is enough for you to work this

out, but I'm not sure that that resolves your question today. Is there anything else, Mr. Strange? MR. STRANGE: No. Thank you, Your Honor. I appreciate it. THE COURT: All right. Thank you all very much. Good-bye. (Telephone conference ends at 3:47 p.m.) I hereby certify the foregoing is a true and accurate transcript from my stenographic notes in the proceeding. /s/ Brian P. Gaffigan Official Court Reporter U.S. District Court